

the MONITOR

November, 1991

Commodore Users Group of Saskatchewan

Vol. 6, No. 9

Obligatory Stuff

CUGS

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If you have any questions about CUGS please feel free to contact any of the above executive members.

The Monitor is published monthly by the COMMODORE USERS' GROUP OF SASKATCHEWAN (CUGS), Regina, Sask. CUGS meetings are held the FIRST WEDNESDAY of every month (unless otherwise noted) at Miller High School. The next meeting will be held: **December 4, 1991 from 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.**

CUGS is a non-profit organization comprised of C64, 64C, C128, and 128D users interested in sharing ideas, programs, knowledge, problems and solutions with each other. Membership dues are pro-rated, based on a January to December year.

Anyone interested in computing is welcome to attend any meeting. Out of town members are also welcome, but may be charged a small (\$5.00) mailing fee for newsletters. Members are encouraged to submit public domain software for inclusion in the CUGS DISK LIBRARY. These programs are made available to members. Any member is entitled to purchase DISKS from our public domain library for a nominal fee. Programs are 'freeware', from computer magazines, or the public domain. Individual members are responsible for deleting any program that he/she is not entitled to by law (you must be the owner of the magazine in which a particular program was printed). To the best of our knowledge, all such programs are identified in their listings. Please let us know if you find otherwise.

Table of Contents

Obligatory Stuff	1	Editorial	1
November Agenda	2	New Deadline	2
President's Message	2	Input Buffer	3
Coming Up	4	Executive Minutes	5
Scratch 'n' Save	5	Experts List	5

EDITORIAL

What! Has it been another year already? I can barely believe that I have been the Editor for the Monitor for another year. Time sure flies when you are having fun.

I think every Executive member has mentioned how much we need some new people in the Executive. Even if all the Executive wanted to remain in their current positions (which they don't), it would not be that beneficial for the club. It is way too easy for the Executive to fall into a rut, and without some new ideas, the club meetings will become a little lifeless. But with new ideas, the club can remain exciting for years to come.

Of course it is my solemn duty to solicit volunteers for either the Editor or the Assistant Editor. If this is your first time at publishing, it might be wise to let your name stand for Assistant. With a little experience under your belt, you will feel very comfortable taking over the reins the following year. Take a look at the Monitor - I am sure there are some of you who have some ideas of where improvements can be made. By all means, become the Assistant and let's make the Monitor the best newsletter in town!

Even though there has been much gloom and doom mentioned about the Commodore 8-bit computers, there is still much in the Commodore world that is exciting if you take the extra effort:

1. GEOS continues to interest many talented programmers who are writing utilities, applications and games for GEOS. Many of these programs are available on QLink and other BBS's.

2. Many of the software titles that were too expensive to risk buying are now priced to clear, and their new price is motivation enough to try them out. Even today I purchased a \$31 game for 65% off at Software Supermarket. (Try that on an IBM!)

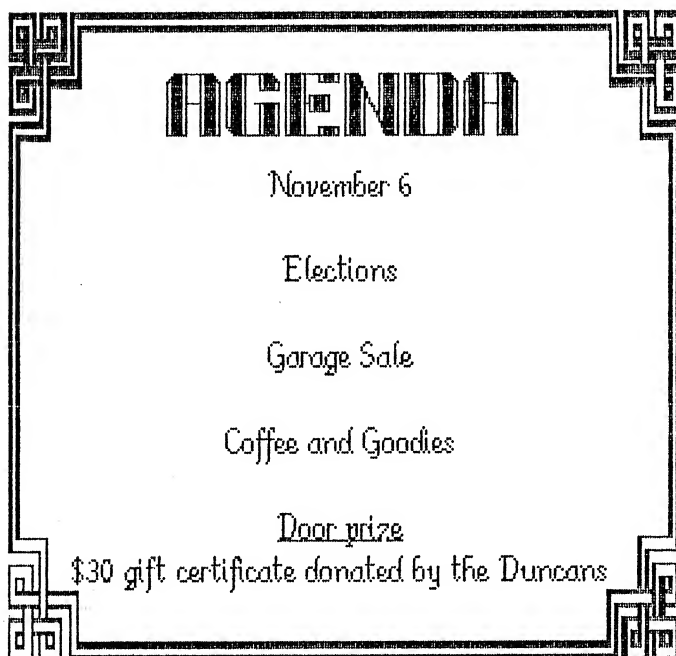
3. Some of the software companies are trying to make even more money from some of their titles by bundling several titles together and putting them on the shelves at very reasonable prices. (It is a little disconcerting that some of the retail stores are trying to sell these bundles at outrageous prices.)

4. New hardware and software is still being produced, most notably the CMD hard drives and GateWay. Even new entertainment programs are being written, although I suppose that for the C64, most of the best games have already been written.

5. QLink continues to thrive. Compute! magazine now has an area on QLink, and I have yet to notice a slow-down in the number of programs that are being submitted each week.

So, there are still many reasons to keep that "archaic" machine. As always, I am still interested in receiving articles about how YOU use your machine.

Good luck in the Elections!



©NOTICE©

We are planning to have the Monitor duplicated at a new business. As a result, all submissions to the Monitor must be received one week earlier than usual.

The deadline for submissions to the next Monitor is
November 22, 1991.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Barry Bircher

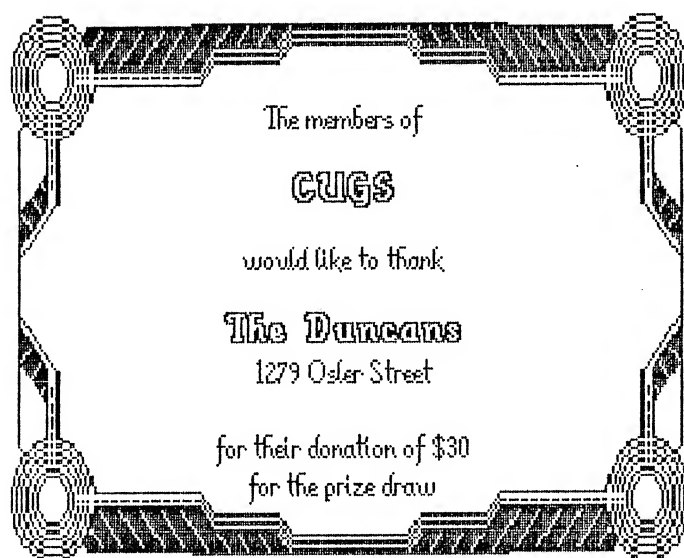
The provincial and civic elections are now over and the results are in. The civic election has placed a message and the people have voiced their opinions. They basically said that the majority of the last city council was doing an OK job. I was a little surprised over the landslide win of the NDP over both the PC's and Liberals. The message from the people has been noted and has sent a clear message to the Tories. Taking a look at the numbers shown for the provincial election shows more than just who the people say is to run the country but also several other things as well. It shows that the people of Saskatchewan are fed up with the Tories. It shows too, that the peoples' votes cast in the 1986 election that went to the PC's has gone to the NDP and to a greater extent to the Liberals.

Similarly, our own CUGS election is now upon us and we will be relaying a message(s) as well with this important activity. This is an important election, I believe, in the club's history as we will not only select who will run the club activities but also get an indication of the active members who support the club via nominations before the vote. I hope to see several people place their names up on the executive voting list. Most positions on the executive roster are open and require names of club members who want the club to succeed in the coming years.

My name still stands for the position as President with the understanding that a potential successor will put his name into the Vice Presidents position. The Vice President's position as well as Assistant Librarian, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer, Assistant Editor are open to any budding person who wants to help out with the club's activities. These positions are primarily training positions for those who will eventually take over the respective senior positions at a later election. Failing to fill these positions will indicate that the club does not have the backing for its continued

existence. I don't want to appear as an alarmist, but if there is no member participation, the club will fold, period. The present executive have done an excellent job of procuring club activities, but their ideas and dedication can last for a finite period. We need new members and ideas to allow the club to grow and continue to provide a needed service to the Commodore 8-bit market out there. Please consider yourself for a position for one of these areas.

'Till next time, election fever is over with for awhile.



THE INPUT BUFFER

by Dan Levine

Many programmers will attempt to correct me when I begin speaking to them about the C-64's INPUT buffer. They interrupt with, "Oh, you must mean the KEYBOARD buffer!" However, that's not what I mean. Few know about the power of this OTHER buffer.

The INPUT buffer spans the 88 bytes from 512 through 600. For you HEX-nuts, (no pun intended) that's \$0200 - \$0258.

What's so great about this INPUT buffer?

If you POKE a null terminated string into this buffer, POKE 2 locations, and SYS 42118, the string will be executed as if you typed it in yourself in immediate mode.

Well, that sounds like the KEYBOARD buffer to me. What's the difference?

There are two nice differences between the two buffers:

First, size! The KEYBOARD buffer can contain a maximum of 10 characters. However, as I said before, the INPUT buffer is 88 characters long, giving you much more flexibility.

Second, the INPUT buffer doesn't print out the commands you send to it. The KEYBOARD buffer, however, does PRINT out all the keypresses you leave for it to execute.

OK, can you give me an example?

Sure! Look at the following program:

```
10 C$="?HI$"+CHR$(0)
20 HI$="Hello there"
30 FOR I=1 TO LEN(C$)
40 POKE 511+I,ASC(MID$(C$,I))
50 NEXT I
60 POKE 781,255:POKE 782,1
70 SYS 42118
```

I suggest that you type this in. Here's my line by line explanation:

LINE 10: This line builds a null terminated string, C\$, which we want to execute. Note that it is legal to use the standard abbreviations for the commands you place into the string. This is a good way to conserve space.

LINE 20: This line defines HI\$ so that when C\$ is executed, it will print "Hello there". Note that this is another way to save space. Remember, you only have 88 bytes, so don't waste them.

LINES 30 - 50: These lines POKE the string into the INPUT buffer. Nothing tricky here!

LINE 60: This sets up the computer's X and Y registers for the SYS call in line 70.

LINE 70: When the computer executes this line, the program (in effect) ENDS and execution is transferred over to what ever was POKED into the INPUT buffer.

When you RUN this program, it has the same effect as entering: ?HI\$ (after HI\$ is defined).

Big Deal! What can I use that for?

Consider this: You want to write a calculator program for a friend, who doesn't program, so that he can see the power of his computer. However, writing the program may mean re-inventing the wheel (writing math calculating routines in BASIC). Do you:

A) decide to re-invent the wheel and write your own BUG-FREE equation simplification routine in slow CBM BASIC,

B) give up after you tried choice A and buy him a calculator, or
C) use the input buffer to output the result of the calculations?

If you don't select choice C, then I suggest that you pick it and read on anyway, so you can see what you're missing!

Thanks for picking choice C. Look how simple this program is using the INPUT buffer:

```
10 ?"Enter calculation"
20 INPUT C$
30 C$="?" + C$ + ":RUN" + CHR$(8)
40 FOR I=1 TO LEN(C$)
50 POKE 511+I,ASC(MID$(C$,I))
60 NEXT I
70 POKE 781,255:POKE 782,1
80 SYS 42118
```

Let's see here. The only new thing is in line 30. We have told the computer to create a string with 2 commands (separated by a ":" in the usual manner). If, for example you enter 2*8/4+3-(2/8) when you RUN the program, line 30 will set C\$ equal to: "2*8/4+3-(2/8):RUN" plus the null character. This string is executed in the same manner as before. Thus we see the answer printed by the computer (6.75) and then the program re-RUNs itself.

This is much simpler than choice A above and is less expensive than choice B.

Couldn't I have simply used the KEYBOARD buffer and PRINT statements to have the program edit itself and get the same results?

Yes! However, there are 2 possible problems.

Problem 1: Every time you RENUMBER your program, you'll have to change the line number you PRINT so that it still replaces the correct line.

Problem 2: If you decide to compile your program, it won't work at all, since the compiler has gotten rid of your line numbers altogether! However, the INPUT buffer approach will still work when compiled (as long as the compiler doesn't require the use of the INPUT buffer!)

That's all for the INPUT buffer tutorial. It's only meant to be a start. Play around with it to discover its power and versatility.

GOOD LUCK!

FOR SALE

Commodore 128 Computer

Asking price: \$600.00

Offers welcome

Please call 584-3371 and ask for Shaun

Features:

- ⇒ third party 64K video RAM installed
- ⇒ Commodore 1571 disk drive with V5.0 ROM installed
- ⇒ Commodore 1902 RGB/Colour monitor

Includes:

- ⇒ all cables
- ⇒ user manual and programmers reference guide
- ⇒ a few machine language manuals

Games

- ⇒ Alcon, Renegade, Bubble Bobble, Arkanoid, \$5.00 each, all 4 for \$15.00
- ⇒ Arkanoid II, \$10.00
- ⇒ Printmaster Plus & Art Gallery I, \$30.00
- ⇒ Qix, \$10.00
- ⇒ Test Drive II and ALL car/scenery disks, \$30.00
- ⇒ Battle Chess, \$15.00
- ⇒ Sim City V1.1, \$10.00

COMING UP

December 4

Presentation

DIGIplayer

by: Ross Parker

Door prize

\$30 gift certificate donated by The Duncans

January 6

Presentation

Modems and BBS

by: Garth Strawford

Executive Meeting Minutes

October 7, 1991

by J. Real Charron
Secretary/Treasurer

- ✂ Barry read the mail.
- ✂ Garth purchased 20 PD disks.
- ✂ Keith has a complete set of the GEOS library.
- ✂ Jarrett to look into getting the Monitor printed by SGI.
- ✂ Garth to look after the old C64 library.
- ✂ Barry to contact Bart at Software SuperMarket for December's Monitor prize and January's door prize.

Scratch 'n' Save

by Earl Brown

Once again it is election night for the CUGS Executive. And just like every year since I have joined, members at large have been invited to add their names to the list of available people to run. At our last meeting, the President suggested that anyone willing to run should give me a call. Once again this year I have yet to receive a call from any member offering to put their name on the ballot list for any executive position. At our last executive meeting, I learned how many of the executives were still willing to submit their names into one of the executive positions. There are many positions to be filled (including mine) that offer a challenging opportunity for anyone. You do not have to be a skilled computer user in order to fill any of these positions. You just have to have a willingness to spend a little time each month; first, to attend the executive meeting to come up with fresh ideas of interest to all the members of our club and second, to implement these ideas into our general meeting. Some of the positions require more time than others but generally speaking, the challenge can easily be met, timewise, by practically anyone. The club cannot exist without participating executives. New executives instill new ideas. We need members to offer their names to run as new executives. If we don't get them, the club could fold. PLEASE! Offer your services.

The club has ordered more 64 and 128 program disks to be added to our library. However, to this date, none have yet arrived. If I receive any of them in time, I will try to prepare a 128 disk for this month's meeting (the listing will probably not appear in this month's Monitor due to publication date). If I do not receive them in time, there is always 'next month'.

For those of you that type in magazine programs into your

computer, don't bother entering 'MULTI-COPY' from Sept/Oct 1991 Run magazine. This is a long and boring 'data statements' type of program to enter, but I'm doing it. For those of you that have purchased this magazine, it will be submitted into the library as early as possible. If any of you wish a working copy before it is released into the library, let me know and I will upload it to the club's BBS.

EXPERTS LIST

Wordprocessing

Paperclip III	Shaun Hase	584 3371
Paperclip (to version E)	Jarrett Currie	757 2391
Paperclip (any version)	Ken Danylezuk	545 0644
Pocket Writer 2 & 3	Yves Desjardins	949 8526
Pocket Writer	Barry Bircher	543 8840
Pocket Writer	Real Charron	586 1843
Fontmaster II	Michael Rodgers	728 2595

Spreadsheets

Pocket Planner	Barry Bircher	543 8840
Better Working SS	Ken Danylezuk	545 0644

Databases

Pocket Filer	Barry Bircher	543 8840
Oracle (Consultant)	Ken Danylezuk	545 0644

Communication

Desterm 2.0	Barry Bircher	543 8840
Pro128Term	Jarrett Currie	757 2391
Library files	Barry Bircher	543 8840

Music/Sound

(Most)	Ken Danylezuk	545 0644
Stereo Sid Editor	Michael Rodgers	728 2595
Enhanced Sid Player	Michael Rodgers	728 2595

Languages

Forth	Ken Danylezuk	545 0644
Pascal	Ken Danylezuk	545 0644
ML (machine language)	Ken Danylezuk	545 0644
ML (machine language)	Barry Bircher	543 8840
BASIC 7.0 (graphics)	Shaun Hase	584 3371
BASIC (2.0-7.0, files)	Ken Danylezuk	545 0644

Graphics

Print Shop/Master	Ken Danylezuk	545 0644
Koala Painter/Printer	Ken Danylezuk	545 0644

Hardware

Disk Drive Maintenance	Ken Danylezuk	545 0644
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GEOS

GEOS 64	Jarrett Currie	757 2391
GEOS 128	Barry Bircher	543 8840

General